



EPA Makes Grants Available to States to Implement Water Quality Monitoring and Public Notification Programs at the Nation's Beaches

EPA is making \$9.75 million in grants available in 2008 to eligible states to protect public health at the Nation's beaches. These grants are available to coastal and Great Lakes states to help them implement programs to monitor water quality at the beach and to notify the public when water quality problems exist.



Background

Each swimming season, state and local health and environmental protection agencies monitor the quality of water at the Nation's beaches. When bacteria levels in the water are too high, these agencies notify the public by posting beach warnings or closing the beach.

To improve water quality testing at the beach and to help beach managers better inform the public when there are water quality problems, Congress passed the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH Act) in October 2000. This Act authorizes EPA to award grants to eligible states, tribes, and territories to develop and implement beach water quality monitoring and notification programs at coastal and Great Lakes recreational waters at beaches. These grants also help states develop and implement programs to inform the public about the risk of exposure to disease-causing microorganisms in the waters at the Nation's beaches.

Funding

In 2008, EPA expects to award \$9.75 in beach monitoring and notification grants to eligible states, tribes, and territories. For this eighth year, EPA expects to award grants based on an allocation formula to all eligible States and Territories who apply. EPA consulted with states and the Coastal States Organization in 2002 to develop the allocation formula, which considers three factors: 1) beach season length, 2) beach miles, and 3) beach use. EPA used the same formula as was used in 2007, which includes using shoreline miles as a surrogate for beach miles, while EPA evaluates state beach length data.

Based on this allocation formula and assuming all 35 eligible states and territories apply, the size of the implementation grant award varies from \$147,600 to \$526,300. If fewer than 35 States and Territories apply for the allocated amount, or if any applicant fails to meet the statutory eligibility requirements for the grants, then EPA will distribute available grant funds to eligible States and Territories in the following order:

- 1) States that meet the eligibility requirements for implementation grants and that have met the statutory conditions applicable to previously awarded section 406 grants will be awarded the full amount of funds allocated under the formula described above.
- 2) EPA may award program implementation grants to local governments in states where the Agency determines the state has not met the requirements for implementation grants.
- 3) EPA will conduct a monitoring and notification program for beaches in those states that does not have a program for monitoring and notification that is consistent with EPA's grant performance criteria. EPA will consider a state's or territory's grant application and most recent grant annual report in deciding whether the program is consistent with EPA requirements.

If all 35 eligible states and territories apply and meet the performance criteria, the distribution of funds for year 2008 will be:

For the state or territory of:	The year 2008 allocation is expected to be:	For the state or territory of:	The year 2008 allocation is expected to be:
Alabama	\$258,390	Mississippi	\$253,680
Alaska	\$147,650	New Hampshire	\$201,450
American Samoa	\$297,460	New Jersey	\$275,480
California	\$514,720	New York	\$347,300
Connecticut	\$220,500	North Carolina	\$299,150
Delaware	\$207,730	Northern Marianas	\$298,670
Florida	\$526,320	Ohio	\$220,780
Georgia	\$282,700	Oregon	\$225,970
Guam	\$297,930	Pennsylvania	\$219,650
Hawaii	\$318,590	Puerto Rico	\$324,080
Illinois	\$240,290	Rhode Island	\$209,650
Indiana	\$202,730	South Carolina	\$293,270
Louisiana	\$320,270	Texas	\$379,140
Maine	\$252,220	U.S. Virgin Islands	\$298,510
Maryland	\$266,900	Virginia	\$274,650
Massachusetts	\$251,930	Washington	\$267,980
Michigan	\$276,210	Wisconsin	\$222,420
Minnesota	\$201,190		

EPA has set aside \$50,000 for eligible tribes who may apply to develop a beach program. EPA expects to apportion these funds evenly among all eligible tribes that apply.

How Long Will the Funding and Project Periods Last?

The expected funding and project periods for implementation grants awarded in fiscal year 2008 is one year.

Who Is Eligible to Apply?

In order to be eligible for BEACH Act grants, states and territories must have coastal and Great Lakes recreational waters next to beaches or similar points of access used by the public. Under the BEACH Act, EPA can also award grants to eligible tribes. To receive BEACH Act grants, tribes must also have coastal and Great Lakes recreational waters next to beaches or similar points of access used by the public. In addition, a tribe must demonstrate that it meets the “treatment in the same manner as a state” criteria contained in section 518(e) of the Clean Water Act. EPA encourages those Tribes with coastal recreation waters to contact their regional Beach Act grant coordinator for further information regarding the application process as soon as possible.

In July 2002, EPA published the *National Beach Guidance and Required Performance Criteria for Grants* (EPA-823-B-02-004) which explains the requirements for states, tribes, and local governments to qualify for implementation grants. You can find this document on EPA’s website at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/>. You can also get the guidance by writing or calling the Office of Water Resources Center, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 4100T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20460. (202-566-1731) or by sending an e-mail to: center.water-resource@epa.gov.

The BEACH Act authorizes EPA to give a grant to a local government to implement a monitoring and notification program. We may do so only if the Agency finds that the state is not implementing a program that meets the requirements of the Act. Local governments may contact their EPA Regional office for further information about BEACH Act grants.

How Does a State or Territory Apply?

Eligible states and territories may get an application from their regional EPA beach contact. These contacts are listed in the *Federal Register* Notice of Availability for the BEACH grants on EPA’s Beach Watch web site at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/grants/>.

For More Information

For more information on the BEACH grants, please contact your EPA Regional Beach Program representative or the Office of Water’s Standards and Health Protection Division at (202) 566-0400.